

APPLICATION FOR
UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

FOR
FOOTBALL CASH

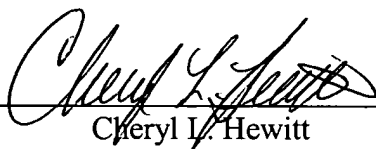
By:

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Technical Field

The present invention relates generally to games of chance and sporting events, and more specifically a lottery-type game in which prizes are correlated to the outcome of sporting events.

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2. Description of Related Art

Currently, there are a variety of game cards and lottery style scratch cards used to award contingent prizes to contestants in various promotions. Examples range from state run lotteries to commercial promotions by fast food restaurants and snack food distributors. Typically, such games provide the player with a card that has a winner or loser designation already printed on the card, usually covered by a removable tab or scratch-away material. Alternatively, cards may have pre-printed numbers or symbols, perhaps in a particular sequence. A later event, such as a drawing, determines whether those numbers or symbols constitute a winning combination.

Prizes are also provided to sponsors in sports based promotions. Examples include prize drawings based on seat location or ticket number, as well as audience challenges in which prizes are awarded if a selected audience member can successfully perform an athletic feat. Of course, the most well known source of sports related prizes is betting. However, sports betting often runs into problems of legality in various jurisdictions.

Several methods have been created to combine elements of games of chance with sport contests. However, these schemes can be quite complicated, which presents certain logistical limitations. For example, one method uses pre-printed game cards that are marked with predicted events or outcomes, many of which are specific to certain players. The number of

possible predicted events, and the linking those events with specific players and/or starting lineups, requires delaying the printing and distribution of game cards until a few hours before the event, since the lineup of players is often not finalized until shortly before game time. This approach tends to tie participation in the game to viewing of the sporting event in question, which is usually the intended purpose of the scheme. However, tying administration of the game of chance so closely to last minute, pre-event information also limits time period over which game cards can be distributed, as well as the total number of potential participants, especially those that might want to acquire game cards in advance and participate in the game of chance without much desire to closely follow the sport event itself.

Another scheme for combining a game of chance with sporting events comprises providing pre-printed game cards, which are marked with a variety of events and statistics that might occur during a sporting event. At various points throughout the course of the event (e.g., commercial breaks), signals are broadcast that indicate particular blocks on the game cards that predict the type of event that might happen in a subsequent portion of the sporting event and the player who will perform that event (e.g., in baseball, a double base hit by the first batter up).

Like the other game scheme described above, this approach is also designed to maintain viewer attention throughout the course of the sport contest. However, it also presents limitations and disadvantages for those potential participants who are interested in the game of chance but do not necessarily wish to view the game in real time. Though it is possible for participants to purchase a game card in advance and discover after the contest whether or not they have a winning card, doing so requires the participants to discover which pre-printed indicators were identified in the broadcasts at various points in the contest, as well as the specific history of events that occurred

during the contest. This presents a logistical nightmare to any participant who does not watch the sport contest in real time (which is the intended effect of the scheme), and makes this approach unsuitable as a stand-alone game and limits the potential number of participants.

Therefore, it would be desirable to have a game of chance that is related to the outcome
5 of sport contests, but does not require participation close in time to the contest or demand close attention to the contest as it is occurring, thus maximizing the potential number of participants who may conveniently take part in the game.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a game card that identifies several sporting events, e.g., five football games occurring in the first week of the season. Adjacent to each identified sporting event is a possible statistic or outcome. For example, the sporting event might be a football game, and the statistic associated with the game might be a predicted combined score or combined total offensive yardage. If the actual outcome of the identified sporting event matches the predicted outcome printed on the card, a prize is awarded. The prize also varies depending on the number of matches on a single game card.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention itself, however, as well as a preferred mode of use, further objectives and advantages thereof, will be best understood by reference to the following detailed description of illustrative embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 depicts a pictorial diagram illustrating the front side of a game card in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 depicts the back side of the game card; and

Figure 3 is a flowchart illustrating the process of creating sport-based game cards in accordance with the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The present invention provides elements of betting on sporting event to reap a reward (without an actual wager) with a lottery in which the sporting event replaces the drawing of winning numbers to determine the winning of prizes.

Referring now to **Figure 1**, a pictorial diagram illustrates the front side of a game card in accordance with the present invention. In the present example, the game card **100** relates to the sport of American football. However, it should be pointed out that the present invention can easily be adapted to any sport. The game card **100** identifies the specific time period **101** of the sport contest(s) in question. In the present example, game card **100** is for the first week of the **2003** National Football League (NFL) season. The card **100** contains a list **102** of five games that are scheduled for that week. Adjacent to the list **102** of games is a matching list **103** of statistical outcomes associated with each game. In the present example, the statistics are predicted combined scores for each game. However, other statistics can be used, e.g., total offensive yardage.

If the actual outcome of the identified sporting event matches the respective predicted outcome printed on the card, a prize is awarded. For example, if the combined score of the Denver versus Cincinnati game equals 50 points, the owner of the card wins a prize. The prize also varies depending on the number of matches on a single game card; the more games that match the card **100**, the greater the score.

The sport contests contained in the first list **102** is the same for all game cards printed for that week's game. However, the specific combination of predicted combined scores in the

second list 103 are unique to each game card.

The number range used for selecting possible combined scores is flexible depending on the client's wishes and budget. A standard range might be 33-51. However, the game can be modified to include numbers that fall outside this range. The numbers are randomly selected within the specified range. Unlike a lottery, the odds of winning in the game cannot be calculated entirely by actuarial methods as they are also dependent on the specific factors of each game and the current set of rules in place for the chosen sport.

The front side of the game card 100 also includes a short explanation 104 of the rules of the game, as well as a description 105 of the procedures and rules players must follow in order to collect their prizes.

Figure 2 shows the back side of the game card 100 in accordance with the present invention. This side of the card 100 lists a prize schedule 201 that applies to the game. As can be seen in **Figure 2**, as the number of matching combined scores increases, so does the prize. For example, if three of the games in list 102 match their respective predicted combined scores in list 103, the owner of the card 100 wins \$250. If the number of matching combined scores is four, the owner of the card 100 wins \$25,000. The card 100 might also specify the selling location 202 of the card, which might serve as the prize redemption center in the case of small prizes.

Figure 3 is a flowchart illustrating the process of creating sport-based game cards in accordance with the present invention. The system creating the game cards begins by looking up a provided schedule for the sport in question (step 301). Each game of chance scheduled to coincide with a given time period in the sport schedule (e.g., week 3 of the NFL season). Based

on this correspondence, the system will choose a specified number of games from the sport schedule for the time period in question (step 302). The number of sport contests chosen for each card can vary depending on the total number of games/matches for that sport within the time period and the total number of game cards used in the promotion. The example shown in

5 **Figure 1** uses five football games per card. However, the number can vary. For example, if the game cards correspond to the NFL playoffs, the total number of games played per week will progressively decrease in number. In addition, other sports might have more or less total teams in their respective leagues and correspondingly more or less games scheduled per week. Such factors, in combination with the number of games cards used in a given promotion, can be used
10 to increase or decrease the number of sport contests listed on each card in order to maintain a desired level of variability among the game cards.

After the specific sport contests have been selected from the sport schedule, the system assigns prospective outcomes to those contests. First, the system looks up specified numerical range from which the outcomes may be drawn (step 303). As stated above, for football games,
15 the range may be 33-51 for combined scores. However, the numerical range may differ depending on the sport in question. Additionally, the outcome specified on game cards might be a statistic other than the score. The numerical range from which the outcomes are selected can be established by statistical analysis of historical outcomes, in order to establish a reasonable range that corresponds with past experience (i.e. middle of the bell curve). Using the example of
20 combined final score, a range of 33-51 is reasonable for football but would not be reasonable for baseball or basketball. By the same token, a range of 150-210 might be reasonable for basketball but not football or baseball.

Establishing a range that roughly covers the middle of the bell curve of potential outcomes also makes the potential payout more predictable, which enables better actuarial coverage of the game of chance.

After the system knows the numerical range from which prospective outcomes may be selected, it randomly generates outcomes for each sport contest selected for the game card in question (step 304). This can be accomplished using any of the random number generating techniques known in the computer science art.

Once the sports contests and their respective outcomes (e.g., final combined scores) have been selected for the game card, the system determines if this particular combination has already been generated for another game card (step 305). This may or may not be allowed depending on how the promotional game of chance is structured. Depending on the number of game cards and the prize schedule, the game of chance might require that each game card be unique, which decreases the potential total payout. Therefore, if the randomly selected contests and associated outcomes for the game card in question matches another game card in the database, the system has to determine if this is allowed (step 306). If the game of chance requires that each game card be unique, the system will return to step 304 and randomly generate another set of final outcomes for the selected contests. Alternatively, the administrative rules might only allow a maximum number of matches, and if the game card in question exceeds that maximum, the system will go back to step 304 and generate another set of scores.

The game card in question does not match another game card already in the system, or if such a match is allowed by the administrative rules, then the selected combination of sports contests/final outcomes will be stored in a database (step 307). The system then determines if

more cards need to be created for this specific game of chance (step 308). If so, the process returns to step 302. If the specified number of game card has been reached, the process ends.

The description of the present invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description, and is not intended to be exhaustive or limited to the invention in the form disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to best explain the principles of the invention, the practical application, and to enable others of ordinary skill in the art to understand the invention for various embodiments with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated.